



Savouring the Bland, Speaking the Simple: the “as if” of Confucian Rites (Lǐ 禮)

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Savoring the Bland, Speaking the Simple: the “as if” of Confucian Rites (*Lǐ* 禮)

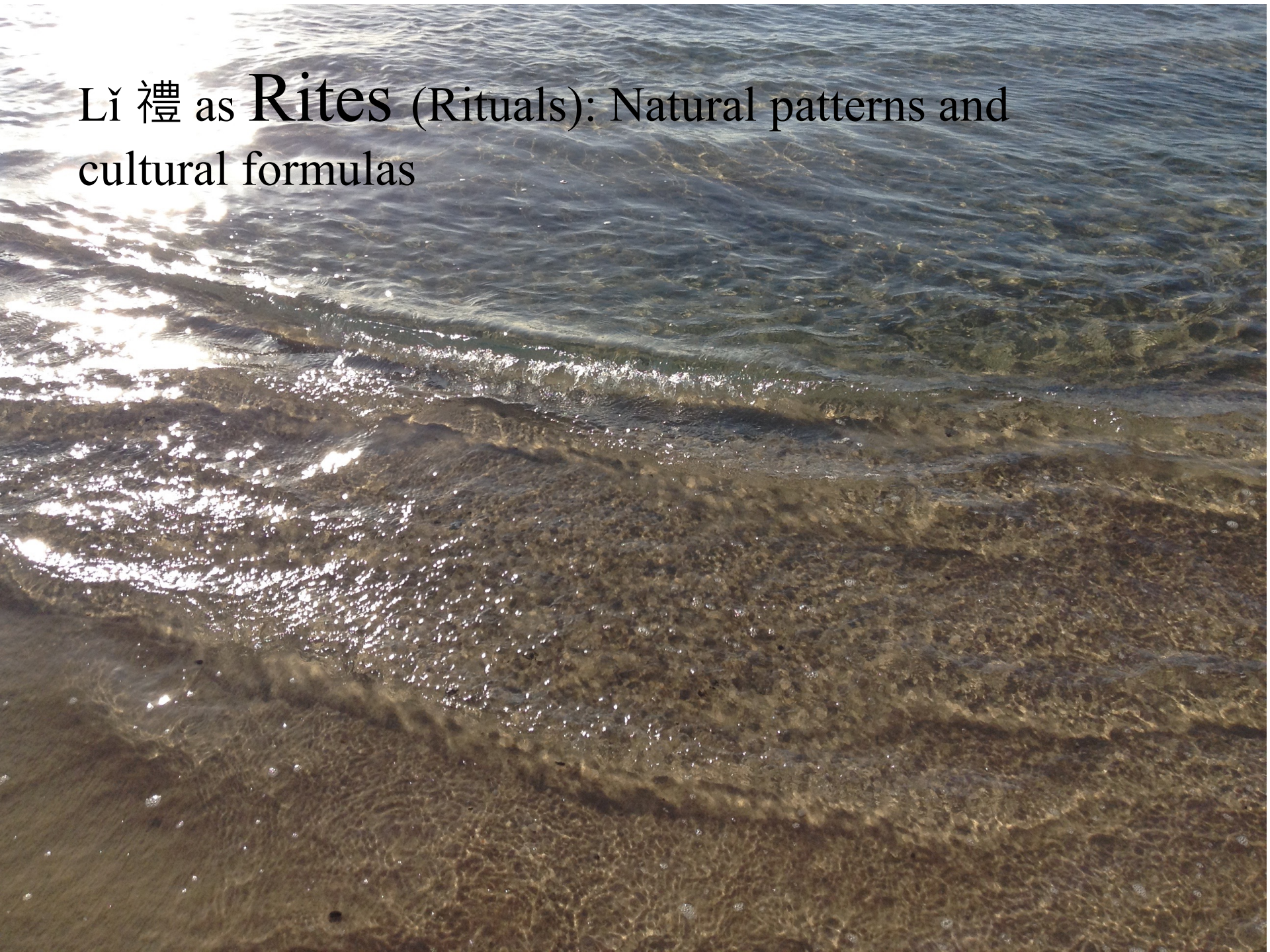


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Lǐ 禮 as Rites (Rituals): Natural patterns and cultural formulas



Lǐ 禮 as Rites (Rituals)

In the first month of spring the sun is in Shi, the star culminating at dusk being Shen, and that culminating at dawn Wei. Its days are jia and yi. Its divine ruler is Dai Hao, and the (attending) spirit is Gou-mang. Its creatures are the scaly. Its musical note is Jiao, and its pitch-tube is the Dai Cu. Its number is eight; its taste is sour; its smell is rank. Its sacrifice is that at the door, and of the parts of the victim the spleen has the foremost place.

Lǐ 禮 as Rites (Rituals)

In this month there takes place the inauguration of spring. Three days before this ceremony, the Grand recorder informs the son of Heaven, saying, 'On such and such a day is the inauguration of the spring. The energies of the season are fully seen in wood. On this the son of Heaven devotes himself to self-purification, and on the day he leads in person the three ducal ministers, his nine high ministers, the feudal princes (who are at court), and his Great officers, to meet the spring in the eastern suburb; and on their return, he rewards them all in the court. He charges his assistants to disseminate (lessons of) virtue, and harmonise the governmental orders, to give effect to the expressions of his satisfaction and bestow his favours; down to the millions of the people. Those expressions and gifts thereupon proceed, every one in proper (degree and direction). He also orders the Grand recorder to guard the statutes and maintain the laws, and (especially) to observe the motions in the heavens of the sun and moon, and of the zodiacal stars in which the conjunctions of these bodies take place, so that there should be no error as to where they rest and what they pass over; that there should be no failure in the record of all these things, according to the regular practice of early times.

Lǐ 禮 as Rites (Rituals)

孟春之月，日在營室，昏參中，旦尾中。其日甲乙。其帝大皞，其神句芒。其蟲鱗。其音角，律中大簇。其數八。其味酸，其臭膻。其祀戶，祭先脾。

是月也，以立春。先立春三日，大史謁之天子曰：某日立春，盛德在木。天子乃齋。立春之日，天子親帥三公、九卿、諸侯、大夫以迎春於東郊。還反，賞公卿、諸侯、大夫於朝。命相布德和令，行慶施惠，下及兆民。慶賜遂行，毋有不當。乃命大史守典奉法，司天日月星辰之行，宿離不貸，毋失經紀，以初為常。

Lǐ 禮 as Rites (Rituals)

仲春之月，日在奎，昏弧中，旦建星中。其日甲乙，其帝大皞，其神句芒。其蟲鱗。其音角，律中夾鐘。其數八。其味酸，其臭膾，其祀戶，祭先脾。

是月也，安萌芽，養幼少，存諸孤。擇元日，命民社。命有司省囷圉，去桎梏，毋肆掠，止獄訟。

Lǐ 禮 as Rites (Rituals)

季春之月，日在胃，昏七星中，旦牽牛中。其日甲乙。其帝大皞，其神句芒。其蟲鱗。其音角，律中姑洗。其數八。其味酸，其臭膻。其祀戶，祭先脾。

是月也，天子乃薦鞠衣于先帝。命舟牧覆舟，五覆五反。乃告舟備具於天子焉，天子始乘舟。薦鮪于寢廟，乃為麥祈實。

The formulaic and the
personal are the two sides of
the same *Lǐ* 禮



The Poetics of
Xīng 興

Lǐ 禮 as

Encounter



Encounter



Reciprocity (Host and Guest)

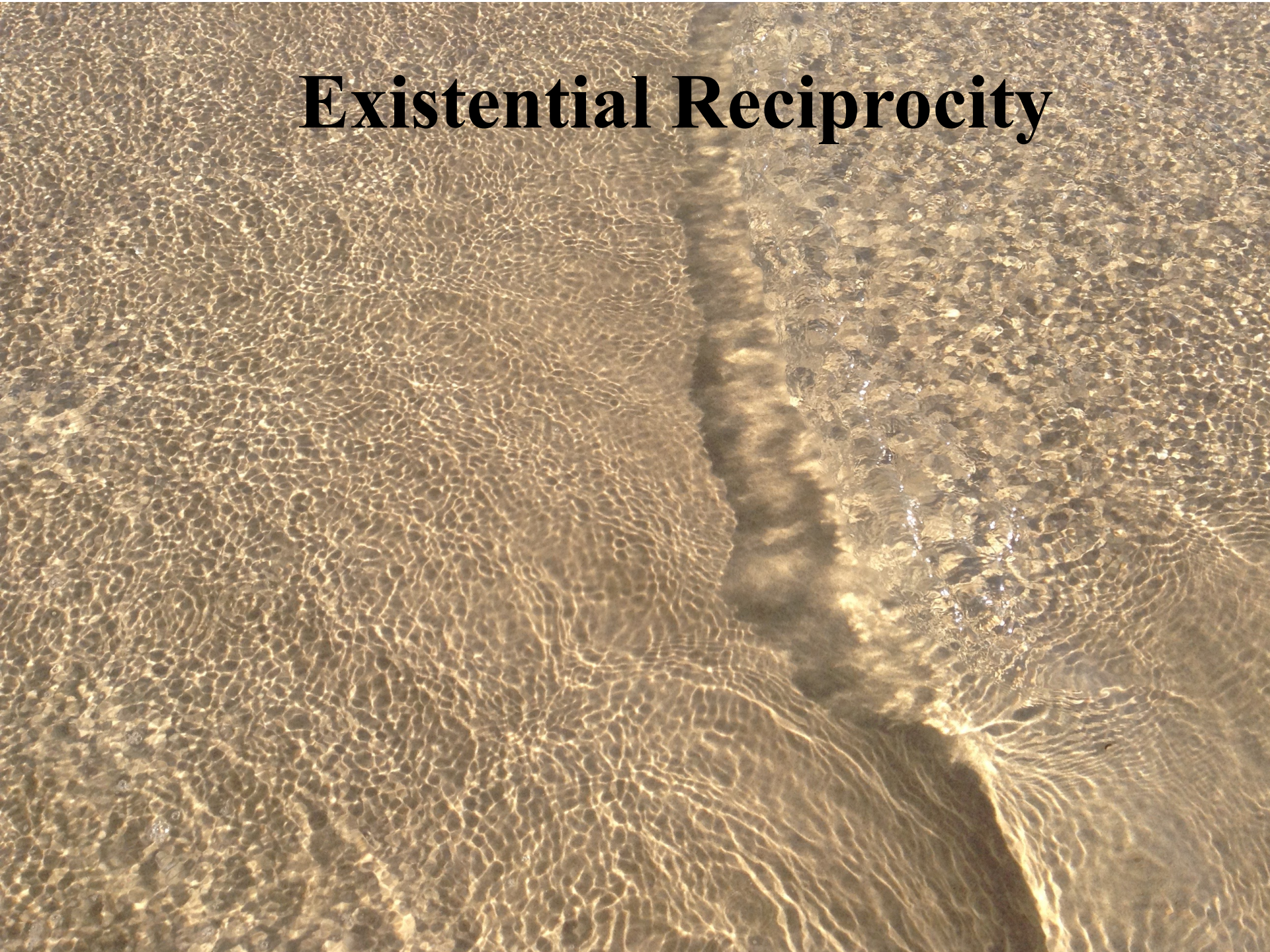
Respect is to establish
commensurability
Of
比

夫禮者，自卑而尊人。雖負販者，必有尊也，而況富貴乎？富貴而知好禮，則不驕不淫；貧賤而知好禮，則志不懾。（《禮記曲禮上》）

子曰：「君子之於天下也，無適也，無莫也，義之與比。」(*Analects* 3.10)

仲弓問仁。子曰：「出門如見大賓，使民如承大祭。己所不欲，勿施於人。在邦無怨，在家無怨。」仲弓曰：「雍雖不敏，請事斯語矣。」(*Analects* 12.2)

Existential Reciprocity



若非飲食之客，則布席，席間函丈。主人跪正席，客跪撫席而辭。客徹重席，主人固辭。客踐席，乃坐。主人不問，客不先舉。(《禮記曲禮上 30》)



為天子削瓜者副之，巾以絺。為國君者華之，巾以綌。為大夫累之，士薏之，庶人齧之。Qu Li I: 54

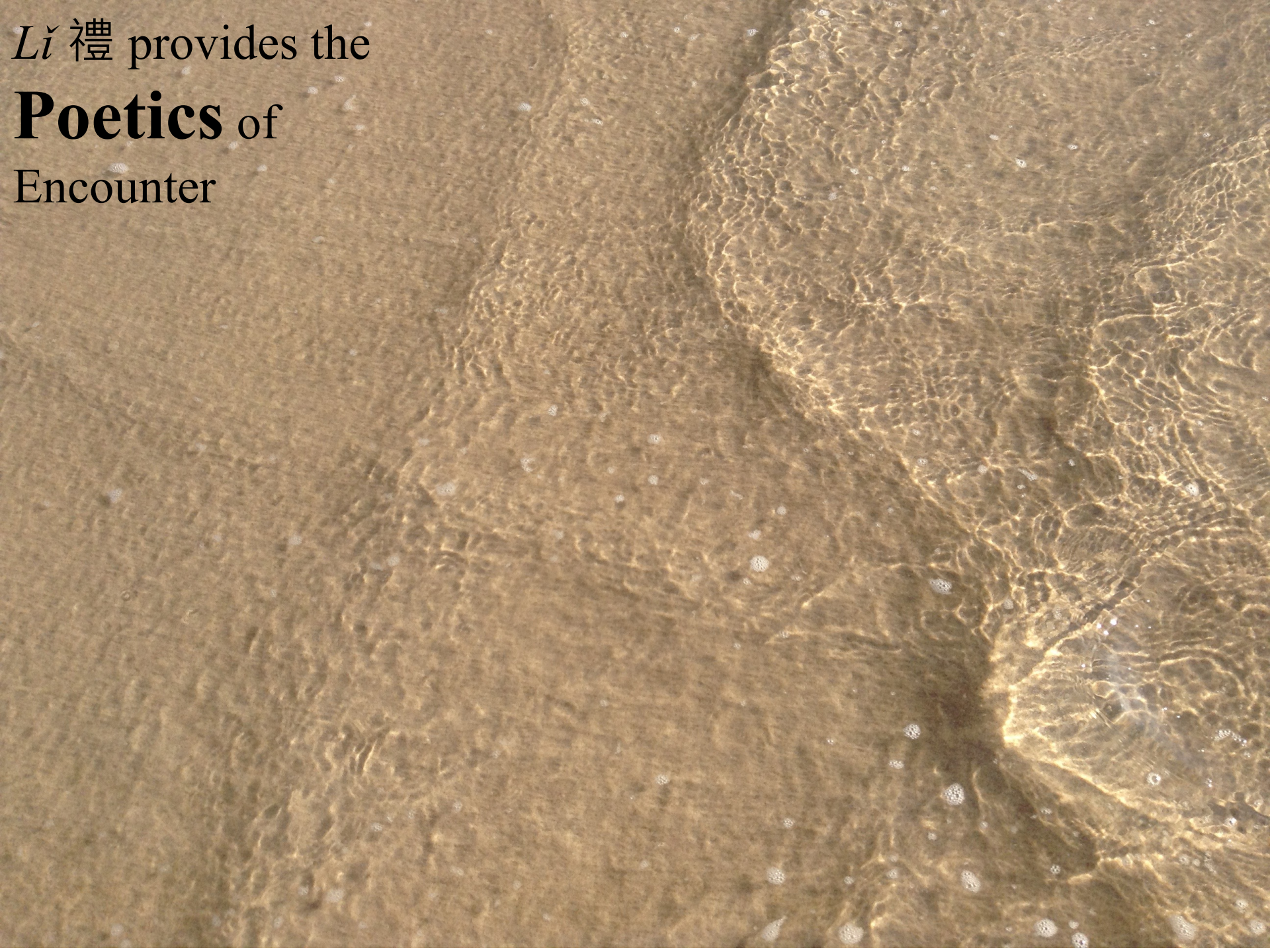
“As if” the non-metaphorical
如

Strengthen the
Thickness of
Distinction





Beautiful Hierarchy



Li 禮 provides the
Poetics of
Encounter

Respect



Respect and Reciprocity





比 vs. Comparison

Respect is to establish
commensurability
of
比



“As if” the non-metaphorical
如

The Waves



Noh Masks

The Wind Rises

A close-up photograph of a beer's head. The left side is dominated by thick, white, frothy foam with a textured, bubbly appearance. The right side shows the golden-brown liquid of the beer, which is covered in a fine layer of smaller bubbles. A diagonal line of separation runs from the top left towards the bottom right. A semi-transparent grey rectangular box is positioned in the upper right area, containing the word "Self" in a black serif font.

Self

Thank you!



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